

# Team Meeting Agenda Instructions

Several agenda formats for project team meetings.

Meetings are one of the most challenging team activities you face on projects, especially if the project schedule is tight. Bad meetings can destroy team spirit. Bad meetings are seen as a waste of time and can even give "project management" a bad name.

One of the most important tools for doing so is the team meeting agenda. Timeslots, objectives and other components can make the difference as to whether the meeting is effective or just a group of people talking! The agenda helps determine whether the meeting and each agenda item have a clear purpose, so that discussion stays directed, the desired goals are achieved and no one feels like they've wasted their time.

***Even if your project is small*** – just a few people, with seemingly no need for formal team meetings – the thought process discussed herein can be useful. You still do need to meet and collaborate over plans, issues and progress. Any meeting, even the smallest one, should stay on topic and accomplish what was needed. The recommended meeting agenda contents help you do just that. For the smallest projects, you may just use this as a guide to think things through, then send out information on why you want to meet and what you want to discuss in a less formal email.

1. Prepare an agenda ahead of time and distribute it to the team. (This can be just in an email.)
2. Make sure the most critical topics are first on the agenda, in case some items take longer than expected and the team decides to deviate from the agenda to finish those topics at a minimum.
3. For each item on your agenda, be sure to define the following:
  - Objective and Deliverables: What do you want to accomplish during the meeting? What physical deliverables should come out of the meeting? This will help you properly guide the discussion and the level of detail covered in the meeting.
  - Owner: Identify the owner of the item. They should contribute any preparatory materials before the meeting and come prepared to make sure the item is properly addressed in the meeting.
  - Timeslot: Assign a timeslot for each item and be sure to stick to it. Keeping each item on track will keep the entire meeting on track. If an item needs more time, you can come back to it at the end of the meeting if enough time remains. Alternately, if you decide to spend more time on the item right then

due to its criticality, stop and together adjust your agenda accordingly to make sure you'll still accomplish all the objectives of your meeting.

4. At the beginning of the meeting, ask if there are any changes or clarifications to the agenda.

# Format #1 – Regular Team Meeting

AGENDA - Leadership Team Meeting

March 25, 04 9 a.m. Eastern Std Time

Caper Building Room 209c

Overall Meeting Objective: Regular team meeting. Review critical upcoming pieces of the team's schedule and ensure work is understood and assigned. Spend some meeting time resolving issues that need group collaboration.

	Item	Owner	Time
1.	<b>Recap Prior Meeting – March 18</b> <b>Objective: Remind group of key actions taken last time to avoid wasting time on context later in the meeting.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ref document – Leadership Team Meeting Notes – March 11</li><li>• Ref document – Leadership Team Meeting Notes – March 12</li></ul>	J. Crane	9:00
2.	<b>Approach to Next Planning Cycle (review)</b> <b>Objective: Reach agreement on how group will go from top corporate goals to high level plan for next fiscal year.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ref document – Corporate Goals Presentation</li><li>• Ref document – Straw Man Planning Process Flow</li></ul>	B. Pabst	9:10
3.	<b>Activity group - Developing stakeholder relationships</b> <b>Objective: Review progress and near term activities, adjust if any issues have arisen since last review.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ref document – Master Schedule and Milestones</li><li>• Ref document – Stakeholder Influence Diagram</li></ul>	B. Pabst	9:45
4.	<b>Facilitated Process for Issue Resolution</b> <b>Objective: Collaborative problem solving – discussion of top 3-5 issues as time permits.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ref document – Issues List</li><li>• Ref document – Action Items</li><li>• Ref document – Leadership Team Meeting Plan</li></ul>	K. Reese	11:15
5.	<b>New Issues, Action Planning</b> <b>Objective: Leave with near term actions assigned and agreement on most important open issues to address next.</b>	All	12:00
6.	<b>Adjourn</b>	All	12:30

## Format #2 – Regular Team Meeting

This simple agenda works off of a standing agenda of topics for a team meeting, i.e. reviewing status of action items, risks, dependencies and milestone deadlines. The key to making it work, though, is that the agenda includes a column for objectives and deliverables. For each agenda item, what is the objective of the discussion and what, if any, tangible deliverables should result from the discussion?

Another key point is that timeslots are assigned to each item. Either the meeting leader or an appointed timekeeper should keep an eye on the assigned timeslots. If an item starts to run over its slot, the team should stop and decide quickly whether the agenda should be changed on the fly to allow this item's discussion to continue vs. recording an action and moving to the next agenda topic.

### Example Project Meeting Agenda

Item	Objective, Deliverables	Owner	Timeslot
Review current action items that warrant group discussion.	Understand what near-term actions are still open and clarify what work remains on them, including team member responsibilities.  (NOTE: Main emphasis here is to communicate and understand dependencies and any issues with completing the milestones, not to do detailed status dumps in the meeting.)	Irene (Project Leader)	1 – 1:15
Review risks, critical issues and key dependencies.	Understand state of critical dependencies:  Do we need to invoke any backup plans?  Do we have any new critical issues to add to the list?  Specifically review the results of the testing for Issue #2, performance of third party software.	Irene  Dave (technical lead)	1:15 – 1:45
Review milestones list.	Look ahead to upcoming milestones (next 2 months), discuss any perceived threats to each milestone date, assign actions.	Irene (Project Leader)	1:45 to 2:00
Recap next steps/new action items.	Make sure everyone understands what new work they've been given and is committed to making the assigned date for their action(s).	Irene	2:00 – 2:15

## Format #3 – Project Team Launch or Kickoff Meeting

### Meeting Objectives:

1. Brief team on business context of next year's projects.
2. Launch several "sub-projects" effectively by discussing project goals, clarifying team member responsibilities, specifying critical timeline elements to meet the goals and identifying risks that must be managed.
3. In above, concentrate on near-term critical program activities so team leaves with context for their work and understanding of their tasks and deadlines.

### Deliverables from Meeting:

- Deliverables – drafts of charters, team responsibilities, milestones/timeline, risk matrix
- Issues list and action items
- Decision on team meeting approach going forward

### Template for Kickoff Meeting Agenda (*with Example Items filled in*)

Agenda Item	Who	Time
<b>Introduction</b> – Confirm Objectives and Agenda	Carter	
<b>Briefing and questions - Business drivers for 2004 program</b> (expressed in a draft Charter document brought to the meeting).  <b>Goals</b> are Product X sales and profit margins.  <b>Resulting effort/feature groupings and priorities:</b>  1) Regulatory certification completion;  2) Full product production release;  3) Feature additions;  4) Margin improvements	Facilitated by Carter Comments from Tom R. (executive)	20 min
<b>1) Regulatory certification test sequence:</b>  Goals and success factors, including test plans; who is doing what; timeline, risks, actions.	Project Manager	30 min
<b>Break</b>		10 min

<b>2) Product X Production Release</b>  Goals: Review critical success factors from Production  Team responsibilities; Timeline; Risks, Issues; Actions	Project Manager and Production Lead  Facilitated by Carter	45 min
<b>Break</b>		10 min
<b>3) Feature additions</b>  Goals: Including critical success factors from most important customers  Team responsibilities; Timeline; Risks, Issues; Actions	Bill; facilitated by Carter	45 min
<b>Next steps</b>  Discuss team meeting format/schedule from now on.  Plan when to meet again to cover 4) Margin improvements (above)	Carter, Bill	10 min.

## Administrative Information

Revision	Author	Date	Sections Affected	Change Summary
1.0		1/3/2009		

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